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Address—"Abraham Lincoln"

By Ralph G. Lindstrom, Esquire

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF

HON. CLYDE DOYLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 1950

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, the following is an address on Abraham Lincoln, delivered on Sunday afternoon, February 12, 1950, at the Ford Theater, Washington, D. C. This is the very theater room and location where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. The speech was delivered by a distinguished lawyer of the State of California Bar Association, to wit, Ralph G. Lindstrom. Mr. Lindstrom is recognized as one of the prominent men of our Nation; he has given much of his time and ability to a deep and consecrated study of the events surrounding the life of Abraham Lincoln, and had come to Washington again for the expressed purpose of doing some more research work in our great Congressional Library. He had not come to make this address on the occasion of the observance of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. I was privileged to introduce him, as I know him personally, as a distinguished, able member, of the California bar, at Los Angeles, Calif., and as I am president of the Abraham Lincoln group of Long Beach, Calif., and also a member of the board of directors of the Lincoln group of Washington, D. C., I considered it a privilege to preside at this meeting February 12, 1950.

In my introduction of the distinguished speaker, I remarked that Los Angeles was a suburb of my home city of Long Beach, and that I had been relieved of giving the main address on this occasion on the life of Abraham Lincoln, by reason

of the fact that Attorney Lindstrom had come to Washington that very Saturday evening before. This explains Mr. Lindstrom's remarks contained in the first two paragraphs.

The address follows:

ADDRESS ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Congressman DOYLE, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, am in one of the main points of Los Angeles County as to residence. I live in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles is the suburb in which I have my office. We permit Long Beach to be another minor community attached to Beverly Hills.

Congressman DOYLE was at a disadvantage. You see, he had 24 hours in which to worry. I have only had 15 minutes, so I'll start worrying after I make this speech on the way back to the hotel after the meeting is over.

Because of the shortness of time after the invitation today to address you, when I walked over to Ford Theater from my hotel, I stopped across the street at the Petersen House and stood there a little while in the room where Abraham Lincoln expired after having been shot by Booth in this building. This thought came to me: What would Lincoln be saying to us now? Are we embalming him in beautiful, lifeless monuments, or are we letting all these lovely memorials speak to us the message that Abraham Lincoln lived and died to leave behind for us? Is Abraham Lincoln dead in America or does he live in our hearts and in our civic lives? Are we thinking in terms of that great Federal Union for which he gave his life?

He had one life purpose, just one. He never forgot that one purpose. He was vilified because he wouldn't forget it. Abraham Lincoln stood long under great vilification because he was waiting for the support of the people of the United States in carrying out that purpose and for the time in which to carry it out.

This one life purpose I should like to have you consider was a Federal plan of govern-

ment, a government under which people could live in a large area with unity in diversity. He was for that Federal Union because he knew the only alternatives were either the anarchy of no law in interstate or national affairs, or an over-all unitary national tyranny which absorbed all of the States and local governments, instead of preserving them.

In this morning's New York Times there is a beautiful editorial and I'd like to use two short paragraphs as my text for this afternoon. The editorial was speaking of the Gettysburg Address and of what Mr. Lincoln went there to proclaim, and then says:

"Mr. Lincoln's mind went back to the beginning of the Republic. He knew that principles laid down in 1776 were not secure in 1863 unless men were still willing to give their lives for them as they had done at Gettysburg and unless the living were still willing to work for them. One birth of freedom was not sufficient. From generation to generation freedom had to be reborn.

"Mr. Lincoln had a deep reverence for George Washington. It could not have been in his mind that he himself would some day be as greatly revered as Washington and even more deeply loved. He turned back to Washington and Jefferson over what seemed to him a considerable length of time, looking to them for inspiration and justification. Now, in the same way over the same span of time we turn back to Lincoln. The great task is still unfinished. If freedom in his day was having its new birth on one continent, now it is struggling to survive on all continents. From the words and memories of Abraham Lincoln we here again take increased devotion after this new lapse of four score and 7 years to the ancient and undying cause."

There are two possible paths before mankind. It was the peril which Mr. Lincoln saw for a nation which is now a world peril from which, in the light of Mr. Lincoln's life and purpose, we must save the world.

It is the old question of how to avoid the anarchy of no law to govern the relations of men, and still also avoid the unitary tyranny which absorbs all into a general government. Stephen Douglas on July 9, 1858, at Chicago said, in effect:

This fellow Lincoln would destroy all the parts, all the States, all the local conditions and sovereignties. He'd have Congress regulating cranberry laws of Indiana and telling Louisiana to raise corn and Nebraska to raise cotton. Why, God has fixed all that.

The next July 10, 1858, Mr. Lincoln made his response. Think it over in the light of today's conditions in the world:

"I believe each individual is naturally entitled to do as he pleases with himself and the fruit of his labor, so far as it in no wise interferes with any other man's rights."

Don't you see he reached way back to the first chapter of Genesis for that one? God gave man dominion over all the earth and man has been busy prostituting that dominion into an effort to have domination over other men. Lincoln continued:

"Each community as a State, has a right to do exactly as it pleases with all the concerns within that State that interfere with the right of no other State; and that the General Government, upon principle, has no right to interfere with anything other than that general class of things that does concern the whole."

There is a perfect definition of sovereignty as always internal to an area of law and government.

Douglas, you see, charged Lincoln with a purpose to establish throughout the nation dead uniformity. Mr. Lincoln went right back to the Constitutional fathers for his answer. He said:

"The great variety of the local institutions in the States, springing from differences in the soil, differences in the face of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of union. They do not make 'a house divided against itself,' but they make a house united. If they produce in one section of the country what is called for by the wants of another section, and this other section can supply the wants of the first, they are not matters of discord, but bonds of union, true bonds of union."

In his House Divided Against Itself speech in 1858 when he announced his candidacy for the United States Senate, you remember he started out by saying:

"If we could but know where we are and whither we are tending, we could tell better what to do and how to do it."

Well, where are we today and whither are we tending?

America has been given an opportunity to take leadership in the world, moral and

civic leadership, in establishing law in place of anarchy for world affairs. This cannot be done without strong support and understanding by the people of the United States. I know there is a developing ground-swell for the establishment of law for world affairs by making the United Nations an effective instrumentality for world order and peace. But democratic governments cannot get too far out ahead of the people. It is of no use for us to inveigh against either political party or the administration, unless we give that ground-swell of public opinion to sustain a course of action which makes it safe in a democracy for an administration to proceed. Listen to how Mr. Lincoln saw that, when he was faced with the crisis of a dividing union and two sections of the country ready to destroy each other. When he was en route to Washington at Indianapolis on February 11, 1861, he said this, and he is saying it to us today:

"When the people rise in mass in behalf of the Union and the liberties of this country, truly it may be said 'The gates of Hell cannot prevail against them.' * * * It is your business to rise up and preserve the Union and liberty for yourselves, and not for me. I appeal to you again to constantly bear in mind that not with politicians, not with Presidents, not with office-seekers, but with you, is the question: Shall the Union and shall the liberties of this country be preserved to the latest generations?"

Oh, he labored, he thought, and, my friends, he prayed to save our Federal Union, our Federal plan. Now, was this for the United States alone and for its people alone? Let's turn to what Mr. Lincoln himself said so it will be no one's opinion about what he thought. When he responded to Douglas in Peoria in that great speech of October 1854, he said this:

"Let us readopt the Declaration of Independence and with it the practices and policies which harmonize with it. If we do this we shall not only have saved the Union, but we shall have so saved it as to make it and keep it forever worthy of saving. We shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free, happy people the world over shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generation."

Again when he reached New Jersey on the same trip he referred to the struggles of Americans in the Revolutionary War, and then said:

"I am exceedingly anxious that that thing which they struggled for; that something even more than national independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come; I am exceeding anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of

the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made."

Then, at the very darkest hour of the Civil War, when his Cabinet wasn't sure that he should retain the war powers as Executive and when the Congress, in its committee for the conduct of war, was questioning everything he did, then Mr. Lincoln dipped his pen into his very heart and told Congress in his message of December 1, 1862:

"We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. * * * We shall nobly save or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

Notice, he didn't say "last best hope of the United States" but "last best hope of earth." Then he went on referring to the Union, the Federal Union:

"Other means may succeed; this could not fail.* The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

Well, whither are we tending? Now no one can seriously question today, that physically or conceptually, we are one world in time and space and in communications. We can fly to California from Washington in 9 hours. You can go to Europe overnight. It is one world physically. On that fact we cannot disagree; but in this one world physically we have two worlds, at least, politically.

One of these worlds or power groups is headed up, not by the Russian people, but by a dictatorship over the Russian people which seeks to be the head of a unitary world government with this Kremlin Politburo as a tyrannical totalitarian topkick. Oh, they don't say this. They deny it. But all their actions prove it.

On the other hand, the United States—and I fear unwittingly because of not taking the leadership in lawful world affairs—is rapidly establishing a unitary national government. This is not because of anyone's ideology, not because of anyone's politics, but primarily because in war or threat of war, the war power must be supreme. In the threat of war and in the conduct of war and in the backwash of war, power is syphoned from the States and local levels to the national level. It has done so, not only in this country, but is doing so in every nation threatened with or participating in world-wide war. In this country we are very largely substituting for our Federal plan, a unitary national government. Power flows to Washington. Its jurisdiction increases necessarily under the impulse to build a garrison police state to assure peace in a world area of no law or anarchy. We may find ourselves without peace, without a Federal Union, without liberty under a

unitary, national, all-absorbing military government.

Again, whither are we tending? The people of the world stand mesmerized today before the hellishness of bacteriological weapons, an atom bomb, and a hydrogen bomb. They say to themselves, "Oh, we ought not use these but we must and so we will." Oh, I am not criticizing those in power who are developing these weapons. We cannot disarm unilaterally. We must be nationally strong until the United Nations has effective power to police the peace.

But the atomic monopoly is gone. The hydrogen bomb is no pure science secret. It apparently is only a question of technological development. Bacteriological horrors are beyond description as war weapons.

Well, then, what is the best hope of earth presently? Today our best hope is the United Nations. We must not sneer at it. We must not allow it to be frustrated out of existence by asking it to do what we do not give it the power to do. It is veto ridden. But we cannot and should not abolish the veto without safeguarding changes in the United Nations Charter.

It may be seriously questioned if Russia ever spiritually joined the United Nations. Today she is not participating at all. And when she does participate she stymies important action by the abuse of the veto.

The whole world is confronted with business dislocation and trade unbalance which makes, day by day, ever more serious problems in all parts of the world. In the United States we have an uneasy prosperity with a \$260,000,000,000 national debt. Last year we had a \$5,000,000,000 deficit, and this year we'll have another \$5,000,000,000 deficit. We'll have a great deal of excitable debate about balancing the budget and reducing taxes, but as long as the present threat of war and an arms race with hydrogen bombs and other horrendous weapons continues, with 79 cents of every Federal tax dollar going to war, past, present, and future, there isn't much opportunity for reduction in that area of expenditure. We cannot much reduce that 79 cents per dollar until the nations of the world cease spending all their substance and give up all liberty in the stupid business of developing themselves into mutual extermination camps and competitive garrison police states.

I repeat, we cannot disarm unilaterally. We must develop a way under which it safely can be done.

The threat of inflation out of control is also the way we are tending. Speaking of inflation, I wonder if you have heard the anecdote which I recently learned. When in the Civil War the gold and silver stocks were shrinking rapidly and paper currency

increasing, one member of the Cabinet said: "Mr. Lincoln, if we are going to have to print more of this paper money, let's at least take off this motto 'In God we trust.'" Mr. Lincoln thought a little while and then said: "Well, if you do take off that motto, we could print: 'Silver and gold have I none but such as I have give I thee.'" "

We must also realize, I repeat, that Russia is deliberately the most isolationist nation in the world today. The Kremlin Politburo is striving for a unitary, single control, world government. Her concept of a world government would be a totalitarian tyranny, with the Kremlin Politburo at the top. Such a world government would absorb all sovereignties, all nations, all states, all cities, all school districts, all colleges and universities, all cultures and customs, all religions and rights. It would make our world the place of the living dead.

On the other hand, the United States unwittingly, I repeat, has gone farther down that same road than we realize. We do not in the United States seek a totalitarian world tyranny, but we are unwittingly changing our National Government into more of a unitary type than a Federal plan of government. Under the supremacy of the war power, it is idle to say that someone is deliberately doing this. It cannot be prevented, and if the cold war continues long enough and if we continue developing these mutual extermination camps and regiment this Nation of people to the extent necessary to police against hydrogen bombs, then, ladies and gentlemen, you are going to have a unitary National Government, no matter who is in power, because there is no alternative. And remember that power which continually flows to a unitary government seldom returns, not only because of the habit of power at the unitary level but also because the habit of the surrender of the exercise of local sovereignty and responsibility by the people and smaller units of government corrupts independent self-reliance into supine dependence.

Oh, if we carelessly and through inertia change the Federal Government, to preserve which Abraham Lincoln gave his life, into a unitary National Government, even if we then won world war III, whether we fight it as a preventive war or as a defensive war, we will no longer be a nation of free men. We would have forgotten, I fear, America is adjured by her hymn: "* * * confirm my soul in self-control, thy liberty in law."

The United States, if it became the head of a unitary world government, would cease to be the instrumentality of freedom, of demonstrating liberty under federal law.

The American-tested federal plan of law for over-all affairs, but limited in jurisdic-

tion to over-all affairs, is our only possible salvation from (1) world-wide destruction, (2) continued anarchy in world affairs until we return to barbarism, or (3) unitary and tyrannical world government. This federal plan is what American civic genius tested for the world. It is this federal plan for which Abraham Lincoln gave his life in this very building. This federal plan is the only possible alternative to unitary tyranny on the one hand or to anarchy between nations on the other hand. It is the only effective way to save the United States its internal sovereignty and way of life. It is the only safe and still effective way to save the UN. It is the only safe and still effective way to have a government for world affairs which will not be a threat to our Nation, our way of life.

In creating such a federal world government, as was true when we created our national federal government, by transforming, if we will, the UN into a government solely for world affairs, we will exercise our sovereignty. We will not surrender sovereignty. We surrender sovereignty by failing to use it. We will put law where anarchy now exists between nations. That is the only way of ever reducing the backbreaking expenditures which are making this and every other nation in the world insolvent today. Do not forget that in the most inflated economy of any nation in history which still retained any currency responsibility, we have not been able to reduce but rather have increased our national war debt. In 2 years we are adding \$10,000,000,000. If the time came when we had a truly effective federal government for world affairs, and we were to spend \$5,000,000,000 to support it, there would be, as against the nearly \$15,000,000,000 we now spend on the current Military Establishment, an annual difference of \$10,000,000,000. This saving could pay interest—\$5,000,000,000—on our debt and amortize the debt at the annual rate of \$5,000,000,000. What we now spend on debt interest could be used for a really helpful and much-needed tax reduction.

Also such a federal plan of government for world affairs would reverse the trend, the very dangerous trend, within the United States, toward a unitary, centralized government. It would permit us to carefully give Washington—and other nations can then give their national capitals—all the power, but only the power, essential in internal affairs in connection with their developing commerce and the closer association of people in daily life. At the same time it will enable us to retain our national sovereignty and existence, while at the same time we preserve local governments under local control. Thus we may also preserve the individual self-reliance which we so highly prize.

Sovereignty, as Mr. Lincoln conceived it, is an internal thing. It is internal to an area of law. It is internal to a government. It is internal self-control. Whenever you have a thing called external sovereignty, whether it be men with guns on their hips or nations with hydrogen bombs in their arsenals, to be used in an area without law, it is anarchy. External sovereignty is only a delusion. It is sheer anarchy. It is the anarchy which could spell the end of man.

When we save the UN by making it a federal world government for world affairs only, we will do it by creating an era of world liberty under world law where the anarchy of non law now exists. This effective UN will be federal not unitary. Such an effective UN federation would not absorb national sovereignty but will preserve it. It will preserve nations and states and cities and cultures and religions and rights and freedoms and local laws. Yes, it will preserve, as our

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form of government has preserved, unity in diversity. That is humanhood's only way of governing a large area without the loss of liberty which is inevitable in a unitary over-all government.

Finally, the greatest blessing of such a Federal concept of law for world affairs would be to challenge man to think in terms of people, in terms of men, and not in terms of nationals of despised enemy states. If man can commence to think in terms of man, there may again be peace on the earth and there may be brought out what Mr. Lincoln called in his first inaugural "the better angels of our nature."

I should like to close with what may be to some a presumptuous but slight paraphrase of a part of the Gettysburg Address. I am thinking of Mr. Lincoln whose conscious human life ended in this building. When he spoke at Gettysburg, referring to the dead there who gave their lives that our

Federal Union might continue as our way of life, I think he was speaking to all men everywhere and for all time to come. Let Lincoln speak to us, here, now in our self-pledge to that great Unionist: "It is for us, the living, to be here dedicated, today and always, to the unfinished work which he who was assassinated in this building so nobly advanced. It is for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from our honored, assassinated President we take increased devotion to that cause for which he gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that our noble Lincoln shall not have died in vain; that the federal plan of government, under God, shall give birth to universal freedom from war; that federal government for world affairs—government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall be established upon earth so that men shall not perish from the earth."